

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Traffic Commission convened in a regular meeting at 7:02 p.m. on Monday, March 5, 2012 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Walter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Sargent, Siani, Tsao,
Walter, and Chairperson Rudolph.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Engineering Manager Semaan, Associate Engineer Kamimura,
Torrance Police Department Motor Officer Scott,
Deputy City Attorney Thompson-Bell, and
Traffic and Lighting Supervisor Hall.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner Walter moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Tsao seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: DECEMBER 5, 2011

MOTION: Commissioner Siani moved for the approval of the December 5, 2011 Traffic Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Walter seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

None.

7. ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION

Chairperson Rudolph explained the policies and procedures of the Traffic Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

7d. CITY ATTORNEY'S NOTE REGARDING FEBRUARY 6, 2012 COMMISSION MEETING

This item was taken out of order.

Engineering Manager Semaan reported that the City Attorney's office has advised that the Commission meeting of February 6, 2012 was conducted without a quorum and must therefore be cancelled. He stated that there would be no minutes from that meeting, and that no information presented by staff or the public that evening may be considered by the Commission in its future deliberations.

Deputy City Attorney Thompson-Bell explained that a meeting cannot be conducted without a quorum of Commissioners and that at least four members must be present.

7a. CIRCULATION CONCERNS ALONG GRAMERCY AVENUE BETWEEN SEPULVEDA AND ARLINGTON

Engineering Manager Semaan distributed supplementary correspondence received after agenda packets were prepared and noted that representatives from Torrance Police Department were present.

Associate Engineer Kamimura provided background on the material of record and discussed results of field observations, inspection of physical conditions, and 24-hour volume and speed counts taken on Gramercy Avenue on August 8, 2000 and again on January 18, 2012. He stated that on January 18 directional traffic volumes ranged between 729 and 137 vehicles for westbound and eastbound respectively, noting that the volumes are within expected range. He said that speed data indicated 27 MPH for both directions of travel, again within expected range for a local street. He noted that critical speed and volume counts were similar to the 2000 data collection and that Police Department records indicate that there have been no pedestrian involved collisions or mid-block traffic collisions within the past five years at this segment of Gramercy Avenue. He stated that left turn movements for both northbound/southbound and eastbound/westbound were increased five seconds within the last 30 days to facilitate those two movements. He said that staff would work with the Police Department for selective enforcement of speed as well as with Operations staff for potential signal timing modifications and consideration for a protective permissive left turn (PPLT) signal at Sepulveda Boulevard and Arlington Avenue.

In response to Commissioner Sargent's inquiry, he stated that there have been five reported traffic collisions within the past five years at the intersection of Gramercy Avenue and Arlington Avenue, but only one of those incidents was correctable.

At 7:12 p.m., Chairperson Rudolph welcomed public comment.

Frank Scarfo, Middlebrook Road, distributed a map and correspondence. He stated that several residents on Gramercy Avenue have difficulty backing out of their driveways, especially between 4:30 and 6:00 p.m., due to back-up traffic. He recommended installing "Keep Clear" on Arlington Avenue at Gramercy Avenue.

Steve Aguilera, Gramercy Avenue, distributed photographs of traffic back-up that makes it difficult to back out of his driveway. He questioned what the 729 vehicle count was being compared to and whether the speed trailer needed to be recalibrated. He described the "rolling stops" between Gramercy Avenue and Arlington Avenue and expressed safety concerns about Hull Middle School students crossing the street.

Engineering Manager Semaan advised that 729 vehicles is within the acceptable range for a local residential street. He pointed out that the machine used to calculate the

data included in this item is not the same equipment as the speed trailer put out by the Police Department.

Teresa Browning, Gramercy Avenue, distributed her letter and described difficulty backing out of her driveway because of cut-through speeding vehicles, littering, crossing the street, and several near misses she has experienced. She suggested that eliminating the left turn lane on Sepulveda Boulevard and not allowing left turns would force drivers to stay on Sepulveda Boulevard another few yards. She also voiced support for painting "Keep Clear" on Arlington Avenue at Gramercy Avenue.

Tom Kelesides, Gramercy Avenue, expressed concern about pedestrian safety, high speeds, and reckless drivers on Gramercy Avenue, particularly at the entry onto Gramercy Avenue from Sepulveda Boulevard. He stated that he has had 12 near misses backing out of his driveway, has witnessed an accident on Sepulveda Boulevard, and that the vast majority of the 729 vehicles occurs two hours in the morning and two in the evening. He recommended installation of a concrete barrier preventing left turns from Sepulveda Boulevard, closing off Gramercy Avenue entirely, or installing a deep dip that would force drivers to make left turns slowly.

Shelly Contreras, Gramercy Avenue, pointed out that driveways on Gramercy Avenue are actually curbs that force residents to back out slowly. She questioned if the speed limit should be lowered because of the bend in the road and stated that drivers turning left off of Sepulveda Boulevard often cut the corner going onto Gramercy Avenue.

John Browning, Gramercy Avenue, distributed photographs of back-up traffic that block driveways and maintained that the speed data is inaccurate because when drivers see the machine they slow down. He stated that there have been two high-speed police pursuits down Gramercy Avenue and described an accident that he witnessed at Gramercy Avenue and Arlington Avenue.

Mr. Scarfo stated that he has witnessed three accidents on Gramercy Avenue and questioned why there is no record.

Motor Officer Scott stated that the Police Department had a radar trailer on Gramercy Avenue from February 26 until March 5, 2012, noting that the purpose of the trailer is education and not enforcement. He stated that the average speed of westbound traffic was 26 to 28 MPH and that painting "Keep Clear" on Arlington Avenue at Gramercy Avenue would be beneficial. He pointed out that many accidents are not reported and that he was not aware of any high-speed pursuits on Gramercy Avenue. He stated that there is no place to put a No Left Turn sign on Sepulveda Boulevard and that drivers often ignore double yellow lines.

Commissioner Sargent suggested installation of a berm down the center of Sepulveda Boulevard and Officer Scott responded that it was a possibility.

Responding to Commissioner Siani's inquiry, Officer Scott stated that the fastest speed he has gotten using a radar gun on Gramercy Avenue is 35-36 MPH.

Chairperson Rudolph inquired if the speed limit could be changed to 15 MPH and Engineering Manager Semaan responded that it would require an Engineering and Traffic study to justify it. He explained how staff would work with the Police Department for speed and local traffic device enforcement, stated that the location was viable for a

“Keep Clear” zone, and recommended looking at the entire Sepulveda Corridor before considering a protective permissive signal at any specific intersection. He added that the only element not tied to the Sepulveda Corridor is the suggested “Keep Clear” zone.

At Commissioner Sargent’s inquiry, audience members were receptive to the idea of installing a berm on Sepulveda Boulevard and there were no objections when he pointed out that it would also keep drivers from turning left onto Sepulveda Boulevard from Gramercy Avenue.

Commissioner Siani stated that she has visited the site three times, twice in the morning and once at night. She related her observation that she did not see back-up traffic; however, there was obvious cut through traffic to beat the signal at Arlington Avenue. She added that there were an excessive number of cars for that street and that people come fast off Sepulveda Boulevard, then slow down when they see the trailer.

Commissioner Walter suggested installing a crosswalk on Arlington Avenue across Gramercy Avenue and pointed out that a berm would make access difficult for emergency vehicles.

Commissioner Tsao voiced his support for installation of a berm or barrier on Sepulveda Boulevard as well as a “Keep Clear” zone on Arlington Avenue.

Chairperson Rudolph expressed support for the “Keep Clear” and crosswalk but was reluctant to make a decision about a protective permissive signal without taking all of Sepulveda Boulevard into consideration.

Commissioner Sargent requested that staff come back with an analysis for a no left turn sign at Sepulveda Boulevard and Gramercy Avenue, a “Keep Clear” zone on Arlington Avenue, and installation of a barrier down the center of Sepulveda Boulevard with No Left Turn signage.

Engineering Manager Semaan offered to bring back pros and cons of installing a berm or island, restricted time frames, protective permissive signal, crosswalk, and a “Keep Clear” zone at the April or May 2012 Commission meeting.

The Commission was in recess from 8:26 to 8:35 p.m.

7b. TRAFFIC COMMISSION WORK PLAN – FOURTH PRIORITY
Develop Policies for Installation, Location, and Maintenance of Street Name Signs

Engineering Manager Semaan provided background and presented four examples of street names signs at intersections along Carson Street between Maple Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard. He described photographs of signage and the four quadrants at the unsignalized intersections of Iris Avenue, Hickory Avenue, and Greenwood Avenue as well as signalized Maple Avenue. He noted that staff does not believe street name locations at signalized intersections need to be modified and recommended that Commissioners develop a list of typical installation criteria to be used on a regular basis for new street names signs or when replacing damaged signs.

Responding to Chairperson Rudolph’s inquiry, he stated that currently no standard criteria is used but that Operations staff attempt to locate signs in the optimal

locations and view corridor. He noted that generally signs are located at the beginning of the curb return on the far side of the crossing street, allowing the street to be the window of opportunity to see the sign.

Commissioner Walter discussed problems with placement that include handicapped accessible ramps, trees, streetlights, fire hydrants, and line of sight issues.

Traffic and Lighting Supervisor Hall discussed problems with installation of signs that include sprinkler controls in the right of way, stop signs, underground utilities, and residents' complaints. He explained that there is oversight from Engineering staff on new installations and that damaged signs are usually replaced in the same location.

Engineering Manager Semaan described the notification process that Operations staff conduct before installing a new post. He recommended that the Commission identify the desirable location but leave the actual installation to Operations on a case-by-case basis.

MOTION: Commissioner Sargent moved that the baseline for placement of street name signs be between the side street Beginning of Curb Return (BCR) and the ADA handicapped accessible ramp. Commissioner Walter seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

7c. QUARTERLY TRAFFIC COMMISSION SUMMARY OF REQUESTS

Engineering Manager Semaan provided the Quarterly Traffic Commission Summary of Requests for June 2011 to February 29, 2012.

Referring to the Lowes/Costco signal on Skypark Drive, he reported that Operations staff met with Econolite regarding the suggestion to install north/south split phasing. He noted that the existing equipment may not accommodate additional phasing and may require equipment upgrades, new wiring, and an outside contract at a significant cost. He stated that he would keep Commissioners informed when a final answer is determined.

Mr. Hall discussed Commissioner Sargent's request to review signal timing and operations at Calle Mayor and Anza Avenue. He stated that the close proximity of Calle Mayor Middle School contributes to northbound left turn back-up on Calle Mayor, and explained how it is difficult to adjust the timing without negatively impacting the main coordinated roadway.

8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

8a. Engineering Manager Semaan announced a City Traffic Engineer's workshop on March 17, 2012 in Buena Park; Commissioners Sargent, Walter, and Chairperson Rudolph expressed interest in attending.

8b. Engineering Manager Semaan thanked Commissioners for notifying him what dates they would be able to tour the Traffic Management Center. He stated that he has forwarded potential dates to Caltrans and is waiting to hear back from them.

8c. Commissioner Siani offered her observation that the street name sign on Teri Avenue at Torrance Boulevard is illegible.

8d. Associate Engineer Kamimura stated that the contract for Skypark Drive and Hawthorne Boulevard improvements has been awarded and that staff is in the process of reviewing submittals.

8e. Engineering Manager Semaan announced a Commissioner Certification Training on May 9, 2012.

8f. Commissioner Sargent discussed his recent trips to England and South Africa.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:27 p.m., Chairperson Rudolph adjourned the meeting to April 2, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room, Torrance City Hall.

Approved as Amended June 4, 2012 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
